DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 327 893 CS 507 372

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TITLE The Faculty Development Component of Speaking across the Curriculum.
PUB DATE 3 Nov 90
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (76th, Chicago, IL, November 1-4, 1990).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Curriculum Development; *Faculty Development; Higher Education; Instructional Improvement; *Speech Communication; *Speech Curriculum; Student Evaluation; *Teacher Improvement; *Teacher Student Relationship; Workshops
IDENTIFIERS *Speaking across the Curriculum

ABSTRACT

Speaking across the curriculum (SAC) programs let students in on the educational act and thus require faculty members to attend to their own development as participants in communication interactions. When faculty development efforts are directed toward improved classroom teaching, they become important for SAC. As SAC programs have developed at various institutions, the faculty development component is almost always instituted, and participants welcome it as necessary and useful preparation. The workshop is an instrumentality of faculty development that almost universally accompanies SAC programs. Workshops address such topics as assignment options, student reports, assessment, and listening. Later, periodic follow-up meetings may be held, at which teachers may share new discoveries and approaches to instruction. Both the workshops and the meetings tend to promote collegiality within the faculty, and to give rise to interdisciplinary possibilities. Because of the speech communication faculty's knowledge of assignment options, communication behaviors, and the like, its members are especially qualified to work with colleagues on these topics. Furthermore, the speech faculty can help move the vision of classroom performance beyond presentational skills to the heart of the speech teacher's expertise, namely, communication interaction; they can also serve as resource persons for both teachers and students. (SG)

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THE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT COMPONENT OF SPEAKING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

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CS507372

Presented at the Speech Communication Association

Chicago, Illinois November 3, 1990

THE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT COMPONENT OF SPEAKING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

As soon as students are expected to be active and involved orally in the classroom in any academic discipline, their teachers immediately acquire fresh instructional roles and obligations. Speaking across the curriculum projects and programs let students directly in on the educational act and thus require faculty members to attend to their own development as genuine participants in communicative interactions. For this reason, the implementation of speaking across the curriculum has always depended heavily upon a faculty development component.

Speaking across the curriculum (SAC) is one of several descriptors designating programs which explicitly incorporate speaking and listening assignments and expectations in a relatively broad spectrum of courses within an institution. The twin pillars of its rationale are (1) that oral communication competence may be improved by sustained class participation throughout the student's educational experience and (2) that student learning is enhanced through active participation and interaction in their courses. Such programs are currently springing up in a wide variety of forms in colleges and universities (Roberts; Steinfatt; Weiss, "A University Program").

Any SAC program may consist of any number of components, including (1) an educational philosophy, (2) an administrative

structure, (3) a system of student assistance, (4) assessment of student speaking, and (5) faculty development. Our concern here will be with the latter component.

All across-the-curriculum movements (writing, critical thinking, mathematics, etc.) tend to focus on the learning process, on what's going on in the minds of the students. SAC especially is sensitive to what students reveal about their own thinking and knowledge as they express their ideas orally. Teachers want to know how students are construing the messages they are being sent from their textbooks, instructors, and classmates, and how actively involved they are in the learning process. In speaking-intensive courses, the instructors themselves, of course, become significant participants in this communicative environment, and thus they must assess their own behavior and its effects, an examination typically a function of faculty development. Workshops and other techniques assist teachers in conducting this exploration.

As for the faculty development movement, its emergence in the 1970s was motivated in the first instance by the "tenuring in" of faculty who were presumed to be growing stale and by the lack of attention given to teaching within graduate programs. Faculty development was defined in 1975 by Bergquist and Phillips as "primarily an attempt to improve the quality of the teaching taking place in individual classrooms by focusing on the individual faculty member and the issues that confront him as a teacher, a person, and a

member of an organization. (vii-viii)"

Unfortunately, since that time the contemporary university value system has transformed many of the faculty development resources into support for faculty research rather than teaching. As a recent study of grant proposals concludes, "When faculty members and administrators decide the faculty's greatest needs today, they still work by and large out of the traditional university model of teaching, filling new faculty-development grant containers with the old scholarly wines. (Cooper and Catanese, 59)" Only thirteen percent of faculty development proposals at one foundation were for pedagogy. The good news was that "much of this concerned across-the-curriculum course development. (58-59)"

In a recent book on Improving College Teaching, Weimer retreats to the term "instructional development" to distinguish enhancement of teaching from the now dominant interpretations of faculty development (xv). Here we will still continue to use the term "faculty development," but will be using it to refer narrowly to the effort to improve college teaching.

It is when faculty development efforts are directed toward improved classroom teaching that they become important for SAC. Once again, students begin to be a focus and active learning a goal. Such behaviors tend to be communicative in nature. To improve teaching inherently means improving communication patterns, whatever the discipline being taught.

It is even not unreasonable to posit faculty development

as a sine qua non of speaking across the curriculum. SAC requires disciplinary faculty to give deliberate and systematic attention to the unique characteristics and demands of oral communication in the classroom. As SAC programs have developed at various institutions, the faculty development component is almost universally instituted and is welcomed by most participants as providing them with necessary and useful preparation.

Our purpose here, then, is to describe some of the features which frequently characterize faculty development in SAC programs.

Workshops

The instrumentality of faculty development almost universally present in the early stages of any speaking across the curriculum program is the "workshop" (Weiss, "Start-Up Strategies"). Typically, a number of faculty from diverse fields are somehow enticed into a workshop to consider methods for implementing greater speaking and listening activities into their own classes.

Such workshops, varying in length and intensity, tend to consider such topics as assignment options, student reports, class discussion, the social dimensions of the classroom, assessment and evaluation, listening, and other agenda items familiar to speech communication faculty.

Since the members of the workshop are from widely

varying disciplines and represent different classroom situations, this assortment of topics serves as more of a menu than as a prescriptive straight-jacket. Each faculty member will find those items which are appropriate for his or her classes. As Bergquist and Phillips point out, "An effective faculty development program must take into account course content, the preferred teaching style of the faculty members, the preferred learning styles of the students, and the educational environment in which the course is held. (9)"

One area in which faculty instructional development and speaking across the curriculum intersect is in the creation of appropriate student assignments. If students are to be learning actively, they must be given something to do. Insofar as the assignments involve oral communication, they are appropriate for these workshops. The workshop provides a situation where assigment options may be shared and examined. Simple awareness of the range of oral assigments and activities which might be used in a class is one important step. The range of options which have been used by instructors and are available for others is extensive, and includes recitation, interviews, debates, buzz groups, dialogues, collaborative projects, videotaping, teleconferencing, brainstorming, and the like. In fact, one feature of most faculty workshops is a sharing of ideas which members are already employing in their classes.

In making sure that the assignments selected meet the objectives of the course in which they are employed, faculty

members in speaking across the curriculum workshops may well examine the adequacy and completeness of the assignments. Are students given enough information about what they are expected to do? What are the stages in the preparation, presentation, and evaluation processes? What interventions are available for the professor and the members of the class? (For instance, will the instructor have conferences with students who are preparing oral presentations?) Standards may be built into the assignment rather than being imposed after the fact. In creating assignments for classes in all disciplines, awareness of communication principles will help make the activities appropriate and productive learning experiences.

The two main forms which student participation may take in most courses are (1) oral reports and (2) class discussion, so special attention ordinarily is given in faculty development workshops to these two types of activities. The introduction of oral reports into a class calls for attention to most of the conventional wisdom regarding public speaking in general. Instructors and students need a heightened awareness of such factors as audience adaptation, clear organization, adequate development of ideas, feedback, and mechanics of delivery. Every rhetorical element interacts with the subject matter of the course to enhance effective learning. Furthermore, employment of class discussion to any extent likewise triggers attention to the conventional wisdom regarding group

dynamics and discussion. Instructors and students need to give explicit attention to problem-solving processes, leadership, role-playing, social elements, and interaction, all of which contribute to or distract from the achievement of the educational goals of the course.

Listening is an aspect of speaking across the curriculum which tends to get lost in the workshop situation, with its usual emphasis on the production of effective talk. Still, a body of theory on listening has developed which is quite relevant to the concerns of subject matter instructors. A workshop might well include a consideration of the ways in which individuals process the messages which are addressed to them, and exercises are available for providing directed experiences in listening for workshop participants. Topics ranging from judgmental attitudes to practical note-taking may be dealt with in the workshop.

Finally, depending upon the objectives of the total institutional program, the question of how to evaluate oral participation by students will be addressed. Faculty members in most fields are pretty well used to evaluating written materials, but they feel less sure about their judgments of speaking. They may even feel that judging speaking, with its inherent personalization, is somehow unfair to students. They may also want to pry apart their evaluation of speaking and of subject matter content. In a workshop some practice may be given in evaluation, as through videotaped presentations. Check sheets and evaluation forms may be

provided. And consideration of methods for evaluating class participation in more free-flowing activities, such as class discussion, is important. Thus, attitudes toward evaluation as well as practical methods of implementation may be included.

The faculty development workshop in speaking across the curriculum may, in addition, depending upon the time available and the concerns of the participants, go beyond the basics to consider fundamental questions of communication within the academy. For instance, sexism in the classroom as exemplified in the "chilly climate" for women, has implications for the reliance upon open oral communication behaviors. For another instance, the variations in disciplines as reflected in the literature on "discourse communities" suggests that the kind of linguistic initiation which students will face as they go from classroom to classroom may affect their adaptation to the oral communication situation. Thus the workshop provides a setting for increased faculty awareness of the complexities of human communicative interaction and their interrelation with learning in the various disciplines within the institution.

Follow-Up

A single workshop cannot cover everything, of course. (Some programs have limited themselves to one workshop, it

must be noted.) Especially when a program is expected to have some permanent influence across the curriculum, continuous reinforcement is always desirable.

Periodic meetings may be scheduled, for insatnce, for instructors who have participated in the workshops. Teachers have new discoveries to share and fresh ways of approaching their classes. Problems crop up in every classroom, unforeseen during the planning workshops. What do we do about obvious gamesmanship in a class, an instructor may wonder? Special topics not covered in the workshop, such as how to engage certain categories of students, will be worth discussing. Meetings to consider such topics may be held at lunch, in the afternoon, or evening. At DePauw, we even have regular breakfast meetings.

Meetings are not the only means for maintaining contact with the faculty who have been developed. Documents, including newsletters, may be circulated among the group, describing new developments and sharing insights and approaches. Many faculty development programs include counseling procedures through which class visitations may be arranged, and these visits are especially helpful in the interactive environment of the speech intensive course. Departmental initiatives are also welcome, so that when an academic department revises its senior seminar it may well want to make more productive use of student participation.

Monitoring is important, as well. A speaking across the curriculum initiative is aimed at producing certain kinds of

results. The effects of the program on students and their reactions to it must be examined, and these have implications for the teaching procedures in the classes they attend. When we ask about the effects of the program, we are also asking about the effectiveness of the teaching which is taking place.

Weimer, in a chapter on "A Flexible Mix of Improvement Activities," provides additional possibilities, such as reading pedagogical journals, videotaping and microteaching, dialogue about teaching, instructional observation, and feedback activities with students. She even suggests applying for instructional grants to support such activities.

Much of the augmentation which is planned depends upon the objectives of the speaking across the curriculum program. In any event, the faculty development component might well be expected to incorporate continuing efforts of this kind.

Surprises

The workshops and follow-up actvities in many cases turn out to be more than instructional opportunities. They provide unexpected fringe benefits and considerations. We'll mention three of them.

For one thing, these meetings usually promote an unexpected collegiality. Faculty members find out what others are doing, and frequently gain greater respect for their dedication to teaching. Even within the relatively

small institutions which have been most conducive to speaking across the curriculum, faculty members gave found new identifications and respect. They get to know one another better.

A second surprise is the discovery of interdisciplinary possibilities. Across the curriculum movements almost by definition smooth out the sharp edges of disciplinary boundarianism. Teachers find that they can indeed borrow not only teaching methods but also substantive materials from one another. They get familiar with work beyond their own disciplines and at the boundaries between disciplines.

The third surprise is the focus on learning. Since across the curriculum efforts are student centered, they tend to suggest that teachers should ask "what have they learned?" rather than "what have I taught?" The workshops are not merely additive, but fundamentally transformational for some instructors.

Faculty development and speaking across the curriculum may both be still classified as innovations in higher education. When these programs work together, sparks should fly: serendipity is simply to be expected. Each of the surprises mentioned, for instance,tends to strengthen the speaking intensive courses which are the primary operational fixtures of must SAC programs.

The Place of the Speech Communication Faculty

Oral communication is something we are supposed to know something about, so speech communication teachers normally find a natural role in speaking across the curriculum programs. We know about assignment options, communication behaviors, evaluation techniques and the like. Thus we are especially qualified to work with our colleagues on these topics.

As Nyquist, et al., content, "Since speech communication has, by its very nature, always offered student performance courses, the field has developed a repertoire of student-centered oral communication activities that engage students in active learning. (385)"

Furthermore, communication professionals have much to contribute in moving the vision of classroom performance beyond presentational skills, as important as these may be. We know, as Civkly has reminded us, that "it must be remembered that teaching is not a mere act. It is an interact, a relationship. (9)" The principles governing communicative interaction, the heart of the speech teacher's expertise, have applications throughout the institution, and faculty development programs can be significant channels for the diffusion of such principles.

Although there is some danger that work in speech communication may be trivialized in this process, on the whole our expertise has the opportunity to gain greater

respect in this context. Teachers in other disciplines begin to look to us for assistance. At least we have something to talk with them about. Thus I would recommend our increased involvement in the enterprise of faculty development, especially in connection with speaking across the curriculum.

The role of faculty members in other disciplines should never be downplayed, either. Their contributions to the ideology and their participation in the implementation of SAC are indispensable to a truly interdisciplinary enterprise of this kind.

In defining our role and theirs, we can profitably remember the aphorism that "they are not teaching speech, we are." They in their classrooms are providing opportunities for students to utilize the competence we have developed in them. When students needs help, or wish to augment their competence, they come to us. Personnel in learning laboratories and workshop directors should be professionaly competent in oral communication theory and pedagogy. The students then will find in their classes across the curriculum the chance to apply what they know about communication.

Thus speech communication faculty may assist directly in the faculty development workshops and serve as resource persons to prepare both teachers and students to conduct themselves appropriately in those classes and improve their subject matter learning.

Conclusion

In sum, speaking across the curriculum and faculty development are a good fit, both movements being capable of offering substantial support to the other.

SAC depends upon faculty in many disciplines who are knowledgeable and sensitive with regard to the possibilities and implications of extensive student participation in their classes. SAC workshops and their follow-up activities contribute to the development of faculty who can implement the program effectively.

Faculty development for its part has as an important function the enhancement of teaching and learning, and one important path to such enhancement is the provision for active student communication which is central to the SAC movement.

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